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## William Columbus Cauthen.

**The Life Story of a Good and Gifted Man—He was a Model Lancaster County Public Official and a Writer of Note—As a Contributor to a Popular Southern Publication was Known by the Nom de Plume of "Will Colon."**

From the Sunny South.

Mention was made several months ago, in the Household columns, of the death of one whom we knew as Will Colon, one of the most gifted contributors to our department, and a young man of noble and lofty character. It was my wish at the time to pay him some small tribute; to lay, as it were, a flower upon his bier. But, being unable to use my pen, I was compelled to leave for a while the word unspoken, the flower untended.

William Columbus Cauthen was born February 12, 1870, and was, therefore, at the time of his death still a young man, only in his thirty-sixth year. When a boy of twelve he was thrown from a wagon, and made hopelessly a cripple. For years afterwards, he was confined to his bed, during which time he educated himself by hard study, and by reading the best literature. Though shut in from the active duties and pleasures of life, in no sense of the word, was he narrow. He was broad both in intellect and sympathies, and in every way he kept well abreast of the times in which he lived.

His mind was creative as well as receptive, and not for long could he be satisfied with reading the thoughts of others, he must also produce—must give expression to the thoughts that crowded upon him as he lay on his couch of pain. Not only did he have decided opinions, but he had also the courage of his convictions. He would speak out boldly on whatever subject appealed to him, whether political or otherwise. For his state newspapers and for other periodicals he wrote under the pseudonym of "Junius," while for The Sunny South he chose "Will Colon" as his nom de plume—a name many came to know and love. The feeling and spirit he put into his papers soon won to him the admiration and friendship of numbers of his readers. He had read the best, had thought much, and his dissertations on books and life were not only entertaining; they were instructive and uplifting.

After some years he was able to be out of bed and to go about in a wheel chair. While still a sufferer, and far from strong, he could now enjoy intercourse with his fellowmen, and he soon won deserved popularity, being unfailingly kind and courteous to all. In 1898 he ran for county

treasurer, and was elected by a large majority, his two opponents having sought to use his affliction against him, claiming that if elected he would physically be unable to attend to the duties of his office.

When he left his country home to take up his work in the town, there was an accident as he was being lifted from the train in his chair, and he fell, spraining his ankle, and being otherwise injured.

To some this would have seemed an ill omen at the beginning of a career, but he, undaunted, was soon at his desk, where he put himself into his work with so much earnestness and ability as to win from the controller general of South Carolina the praise that, in his judgment, Mr. Cauthen was the best county treasurer in the state; this eulogy being expressed while the young treasurer was still living and working, and could be encouraged by the deserved compliments.

One, reading between the lines, remembering that Will Cauthen was self educated, and was physically weak, will realize how heroic he must have been to master and achieve so much in the face of the most adverse circumstances. He was still worthily filling this office, after having held it for seven years, when he was stricken down by fatal illness. Feeling that he could not live, his last thought was for his widowed mother, and he tried to arrange matters so that her interests would be looked after in her old age.

It was as a writer that Will Colon was known to Sunny South readers, and so I will dwell as briefly as I can upon him in this capacity. True, he wrote little for us after taking up the duties of his office, being compelled to give to these all the strength he could command. For this reason he is unknown to our later readers. Quoting a few paragraphs may give these some idea of the quality of his thought and expression while his old friends, reading them again, almost feel that a loved and long silent voice is speaking to them.

"Jonquils," he once said, "are among the sweetest flowers that grow; when I smell one I always want to write poetry, only I don't know how."

But he really was a poet, though he never tried to put his thoughts into verse. He loved beauty, and in beautiful language he made others feel the beauty that he saw, to do which one must be a poet. Thus in a Sunny South letter he told us: "The other day I was wishing for a bit of sunshine and the song of a bird, and today they are here. The sun is shining beautifully, and a wren is singing in the hedge. His merry 'twit willow, twit willow,' rings out bright and clear, as if his little heart were ready to burst with pure joy for the breath of the

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## Shocking Tragedy.

**A Young Man Kills Another at a Party in Lee County—An Insult to a Young Lady Said to Have been Cause of Trouble.**

Special to The State.

Bishopville, March 24.—Last night at the home of Mr. W. F. Outlaw of the Henriott section, Lee county, Mr. Grover Mathis shot and instantly killed Mr. J. B. Gaylord, both young men of that section.

From information received it seems that there was a party at the house of Mr. Outlaw. Mr. J. B. Gaylord escorted Miss Alma Coughman to the party. While the pleasures of the evening were in progress and everybody was apparently happy, Mr. Grover Mathis was taking a promenade with Miss Coughman, when out of doors Mathis attempted to take liberties with the young lady. She resisted this attempt and quietly rebuked him. He persisted and again annoyed her. She then left him and went back into the house crying. Mr. Gaylord, her escort, and to whom it is said she was engaged to be married, begged the young lady to tell him the cause of her trouble. At first she declined to tell him, but finally informed her sweetheart that Mathis had persistently tried to take liberties with her.

At an opportune time Gaylord took Mathis out into the hall for an interview. After asking Mathis why he had treated the young lady so ungentlemanly, hot words brought on an altercation. There are several reports as to how the fight started and how the shooting was done, none of which are positive, as this correspondent has not been able to interview any eye witnesses. From reports, it seems that Gaylord had a knife and Mathis had a pistol. When the fight was over Gaylord was mortally wounded and lived but a few minutes, and Mathis had one or two stabs in his shoulder. Mathis claims to have acted in self-defense. The reports are conflicting on this point, however, some claiming that there was no necessity or excuse for the killing, these opinions being based on what they have gathered from the report.

## Drunken Son Kills Aged Father.

Valdosta, Ga., March 26.—News was received here to-day of the death of John Brant, 81 years old, at his home at Nashville, Berrien county, as the result of injuries inflicted by his son, Bob Brant, aged 37 years. The report says that the younger man, under the influence of liquor, on Saturday night, attacked and abused his father, and left him for dead. Bob Brant defied arrest, but finally was overpowered and lodged in jail, with the charge of murder against him.

## Killed by Lightning.

**The Fate of a Mormon Preacher—Meets Death in his Pulpit.**

Carson, Iowa, March 25.—Special to News and Courier:—While in the midst of his sermon this morning, the Rev. John B. Lentz, a Mormon preacher, was struck dead by lightning and fell from his pulpit dead. Just before the bolt struck him he said: "An unseen power is reaching out to draw me in."

Mr. Lentz had preached a sensational sermon on "Character Building." While the services were in progress the first thunder storm of the season came up and the minister started to dismiss the congregation before the rain fell.

He was entreated to continue, however, and did so.

He was quoting the words of a young man, who, speaking of passing a saloon, had said "An unseen power is reaching out to draw men in," when there was a crash and a blinding flash.

A ball of fire fell from the ceiling immediately above pulpit and struck the minister, who fell forward from the platform to the floor. He died instantly. No electric shock was felt by the congregation, and an examination of the church failed to show any damage whatever.

## The Creighton Case.

**More About the Investigation, of which Notice was Made in Saturday's News.**

Spartanburg cor. Charlotte Observer: There is much interest in Spartanburg in the investigation into the charges preferred against Rev. C. W. Creighton, which is proceeding at Greenwood by a special committee appointed by the last conference, which was held here. At that time the character of Rev. Mr. Creighton was arrested on account of charges he made in his paper, The Christian Appeal, against certain presiding elders. It was expected that, during the conference, the whole affair would be investigated, but this was not done and a committee was appointed instead. This committee is now at work at Greenwood, the home of Rev. Mr. Creighton, being presided over by Rev. W. B. Duncan, presiding elder. There is considerable feeling among the prominent Methodists of the State, it is said, and a report has it that already a small fistfight has occurred on account of the inquiry. Both principals, it is said, are well known citizens of Greenwood, who afterwards "made up."

Maj. A. B. Horton, one of Cheraw's oldest and most prominent citizens, died Friday.

## Difficulty in Court.

**Lively Times in Magistrate's Court at Vanwyck Saturday.**

An exciting incident occurred in Magistrate Griffin's court in Vanwyck last Saturday. During the progress of the trial of a couple of negroes for trespass one of the defendants, Tom Ross, told Mr. M. M. Tillman, who was conducting the examination of witnesses for the prosecution, to shut his mouth; whereupon Mr. Tillman picked up a stick and struck the negro. Ross then attacked Mr. Tillman with a knife, cutting him on the hand and wrist and slashing his coat in several places. Parties present interfered and stopped the trouble.

The magistrate fined Mr. Tillman \$5. and Ross \$4. He also fined a negro \$3. for using violent language during the fuss.

There were about 200 negroes present and but a handful of white men and for a while things looked squally.

## Burned to Death.

**Sylvia Cunningham, an Aged Colored Woman, Found in Fireplace with Head and Arm Burned Off.**

Sylvia Cunningham, an old colored woman, met with a horrible death a day or two ago, at the home of her son, Anderson Cunningham, in Cedar Creek township. She occupied a room to herself, and other members of the family detecting a peculiar odor coming from her apartments, made an investigation. It was found that the old woman had fallen into the fire and her body was being consumed by the flames. When discovered her head and one arm had been burned off.

## A Texas Merchant Kills Two Men.

Shreveport, La., March 26.—A special to The Times from Jefferson, Texas, says:

J. R. Bennett, aged 65 years, was shot and instantly killed and his son, Eugene, fatally wounded by Jeff Saunders, a merchant, on the depot platform here this afternoon. A previous disagreement, it is said, was revived when the men met. The younger Bennett was shot first and while his father stepped over to assist him he was killed, four bullets entering his body. The parties are well to do and reside at Newwood, near Jefferson, Tex.

The House committee has decided to recommend an appropriation of \$1,480,000 for a national exhibit at the Jamestown Exposition.